



INL firefighter David Stonhill and members of a local youth group were among dozens who volunteered for the Salvation Army's Christmas Bell Ringing program. Each year, INL makes numerous contributions to communities throughout Idaho.

INL gives back to the eastern Idaho community

By [Nicole Stricker](#), *INL Communications & Governmental Affairs*

As 2009 winds to a close, Idaho National Laboratory is taking stock of its efforts to be a good neighbor to the community and the state. While INL's employees and corporate leaders are always eager to donate their time and services, such efforts are especially rewarding during tough economic times.

During the holiday season, INL contractor Battelle Energy Alliance supports the annual sitewide Christmas for Families program. This year, employees "adopted" 85 families to provide gifts for their 280 children, and BEA donated \$4,250 toward food boxes for each family. Employees also bought gifts for 250 children in the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program.

And each year, the Team INL employee volunteer program provides support for the Salvation Army's Christmas Bell Ringing program, which raises money to help provide food and shelter to the less fortunate in our community. This year, INL volunteers filled 52 two-hour shifts, which saved the Salvation Army \$1,040 that it would have had to pay to staff the equivalent 13 eight-hour shifts.

The United Way recently announced that INL employees contributed more than \$321,000 to this year's fund drive. This year's donations exceeded the lab's goal by more than 7 percent, and over the past five years, employee contributions have averaged 4.5 percent above goal. BEA also contributed \$55,000 in corporate funds this year, making the total INL contribution \$376,000.

Since BEA took over operation of INL in 2005, employee contributions to the United Way have exceeded \$1.43 million and BEA has contributed an additional \$255,000 in corporate donations.

BEA also supports the community through its Team INL employee volunteer program, which provides a little bit of funding to help employees make a difference in their communities. The funding is often used to purchase building materials, paint, sand, essential items and clothing. Since 2005, BEA employees and volunteer groups have completed more than 105 Team INL projects, including providing Christmas gifts each year for the teenagers living at The Haven transitional housing shelter.



INL and Idaho Cleanup Project employees bought gifts for 250 children in the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program this year.



An eastern Idaho family receiving gifts provided by employees participating in the sitewide Christmas for Families program.

This year's projects included: a school supply donation drive yielding \$4,200 in donations and supplies; restoration and beautification of the Idaho Falls War Veterans Memorial; and a youth collaborative project at the Blackfoot Community Center. Another project collected donations, and packed and mailed 380 holiday care packages to U.S. troops serving overseas. The project also donated nearly \$2,000 to provide free phone cards to deployed troops.

And INL managers participating in the lab's License to Lead program organized canned food drives that sent 6,000 cans of food, 1,500 pounds of fresh potatoes, 4,000 packages of processed potatoes and more than \$6,500 to food banks in six eastern Idaho counties.

This year, INL contributed a total of \$473,000 to local and regional K-12 programs that promote science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and encourage students to pursue careers in these areas. That includes more than \$100,000 distributed as 46 grants for Idaho STEM teachers.

Over the past four years, INL's education program office has contributed nearly \$1.7 million to enhance STEM education. That includes 166 grants totaling more than \$330,000. In addition, INL gave \$10,000 to the Idaho Falls Mayor's Scholarship Fund for local junior high and high school students, \$50,000 for the Idaho Space Grants Consortium and \$20,000 to support Young Women in Engineering.

BEA also provides corporate funding for teacher professional development, high school and teacher summer internships, and the INL Scholastic Tournament. Each year, INL stages the Hispanic Youth

Symposium (HYS), which encourages Latino teens to pursue education and brings regional universities together to offer scholarships to participants. In 2009 alone, these universities awarded \$4 million in scholarships to more than 150 Idaho students.

In addition, INL gives \$10,000 each year to the Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC) Foundation for EITC student scholarships. And this year, INL employees participated in EITC's Great Race for Education, as both players and support volunteers. The event raised \$32,000 for the foundation's scholarship fund.

INL also donates technical expertise to community organizations. Since 2005, INL has provided 5,000 hours worth of technical assistance to the community. Each year, the INL Technical Assistance Program provides INL technical expertise to state and local government, and regional small businesses. The requesting organization can receive, at no cost to them, up to 40 hours of laboratory employee time to address technical needs that cannot readily be met by commercially available resources in the region.

Since the program's inception, INL has completed 113 projects. This year's 21 projects included work with the Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corp., Grand Teton Brewing Company, University of Idaho glass blower, Teton County Landfill, Idaho Falls School District 91, Arco courtroom, Good Earth Bio-Solutions and the Idaho Department of Water Resources.



INL campaign co-chairs Lynn Melander (right) and Jo Anna Stenzel delivered an oversized check to Idaho Falls region United Way Campaign chair Linda Milam.



This year, INL awarded 46 minigrants totaling \$120,000 to improve science, technology, engineering and math education in Idaho K-12 classrooms.

Since the BEA contract began in February 2005, it has provided more than \$4 million in corporate funding to numerous educational, philanthropic and technology-based economic development programs. BEA also provides funding to the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Center, Development Workshop, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Idaho Meth Project and numerous nonprofit agencies that feed, clothe or provide shelter and services to the less fortunate in surrounding communities. INL funds philanthropic projects that focus on community, health and human services, and culture. In total, more than \$800,000 in corporate funding has been given throughout the past four years to support roughly 100 agencies and programs.

"INL is proud to be able to make a positive difference in the lives of many," said Lori Priest, INL's community relations coordinator. "During this time of economic challenge, INL will continue to do its part to support education programs, find avenues to help the less fortunate and support the economic development of the state."

[Feature Archive](#)